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A VISION OF

*Europe*

# A V I S I O N    O F *EUROPE*

FOR hundreds of years Europe was the mother of culture, the stronghold of the gospel, the cradle of everything lofty and worth-while. It produced mighty reformers and valiant men of God, who laid the foundation of much that we hold dear. It stood against the onslaughts of heathenism, the hordes of the Tartars from Asia, the Mohammedan Turks from Asia Minor, and many others.

Today it has become, in large part, a ruin. In many places, only about 15 per cent of the homes are fit for habitation. People are living in cellars, wash-houses, stables, and sheds. In a certain town, there were 350 cases counted in which from four to eight persons lived in one room. In fall and winter, the rain, wind, and snow drive in through the cracked walls and ceilings, broken windows and doors. The moral and social conditions are indescribable. About 80 per cent of the children are reported to have tuberculosis. Last winter, some 800,000 children in one district alone could not attend school, because they had no shoes. Many adults are so undernourished that they frequently faint and fall on the street. Children and old people have suffered most, as their rations are the smallest.

The Christians, and the public in general, of the more fortunate countries like Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States of America, have shown a great and noble spirit, in helping their friends and relatives, and even strangers. They have sent over countless tons of food, clothing, and medicines. Hundreds of thousands of people have been kept alive through this noble work.

Millions of refugees are in a state of starvation. Christians can help them by sending food to the limit of their ability. Tens of thousands are clothed in the garments of beggars. They need clothing and shoes in unlimited quantities. Special attention should be given to the young people. For years the highest authorities have fed them on nothing but promises, which were never kept, so that now they do not know what to believe. It is no wonder that nihilism, radicalism and thievery, are increasing among them.

But man lives not by bread alone. These people have not only lost their homes, their country, and even their passports: they have lost, too, their religious affiliations. As never before, they need a powerful source of spiritual strength for their inner life. During the war, millions of young people grew up without religious instruction. For more than ten years, practically no Christian literature has been published in Europe, and the people are spiritually fam-

ished. Their hearts are like a field newly plowed. Unless the seed of the gospel is planted there now, all kinds of political movements will soon win them over for their own selfish ends. The masses of the people must be awakened out of their lethargy. Many cannot understand the tribulations that have swept over them and left them destitute. Their hearts are bitter. They must be led back to God.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a mockery if not backed up by the practice of its teaching. Christians today have a wonderful opportunity to help. Europe needs tons of Bibles, New Testaments, gospel tracts, hymn books, and religious periodicals. Gospel tents are needed for work in the war-devastated areas. Hundreds of Christian workers, preachers, and missionaries are hindered in visiting churches and mission stations, because they have no rubber tires for their bicycles. They need tires and inner tubes, and in some cases bicycles or motorcycles, which would enable them to cover more than twice as much ground in visiting the sick and those who are scattered in lonely places.

At one of the great European conferences recently, a Belgian officer was on the platform. He asked two representatives of the German people to come up and join him there. Before some eight hundred delegates, he spoke as follows: "My father was murdered by the Germans. My brother I

lost in the first World War; he fell in battle against the Germans. Through the second World War, my sister lost two of her children. My whole life has had one aim: the propagation of hatred against all Germans. But I have come to the conviction that this is no basis for life". He gave his hand to the two Germans, and asked them, before all the people, please to forgive him his hatred. It was so quiet in the room, you could have heard a pin drop.

It takes a terrific amount of courage to do what this Belgian officer did. Can you imagine what it would mean if Europe would drop its old animosities and hatred, and make a new start, in forgiveness and love, on the basis of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

*[Further information concerning missionary work in this area can be obtained through the IFMA member missions working in Europe.]*



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